(c) No person was held responsible for two incidences at Simlabahal Colliery and Kustore Colliery.

As regards subsidence of Godhur Colliery of Kusunda area, the General Manager of Kusunda area, the Agent and the Colliery Manager of the Godhur Colliery were held responsible DGMS has initiated prosecution proceedings against these officers.

(d) All requisite measures as are required to prevent subsidence are always taken as under:—

(1) Depillaring operations are carried out after taking permission from Director General Mines Safety (DGMS) under the Coal Mines Regulations 1957. The conditions imposed by DGMS while granting permission are fully complied with.

(2) Due to the unscientific and unplanned workings by the erstwhile owners (before nationalisation of coal mines), number of areas in Jharia coalfield have been declared unstable. Efforts are being made by BCCL for stabilisation of these unstable areas.

(3) 5 projects for stabilisation for subsidence control and additional 4 projects for subsidence control as a result of fire are presently under implementation with funding from Ministry of Coal at a cost of Rs. 16.18 crores at Kusunda, Kustore, Lodna area and at Bata More of Jharia township. One project has been completed in June' 99.

(4) Shifting a large numebr of its employees from unsafe/unstable areas to safer place on Non-Coal bearing land. BCCL has constructed more than 13000 houses on non-coal bearing areas and has shifted its employees from the coal bearing areas in 13 townships.

A demonstration project for shifting of people from most endangered areas of BCCL (4600 houses) is under implementation with funding from Govt. of India at a cost of Rs. 33.88 crores.

Privatisation of Hindustan Copper Ltd.

1460. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Copper Limited is proposed to be privatised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to ensure security of workers employed in the company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government has decided the following disinvestment strategy for Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL):

Phase-I: The Khetri unit of HCL along with Taloja plant will be formed into a separate company. The assets of these units will be valued and will form 49% contribution from HCL in a new company in which 51% equity will be injected by a strategic partner.

Phase-II: The remaining portion of HCL comprising the Indian Copper Complex and the Malanjkhand Copper Project will be restructured by closure of unviable mines in a phased manner with consequent separation of surplus manpower under Voluntary Retirement Scheme. HCL will then look for one more strategic partner for 51% disinvestment in the remainder of HCL.

While approving capital restructuring proposal for HCL in December, 98, the Government has sanctioned a non-plan loan of Rs. 414 crore for separation of surplus employees of HCL under Voluntary Retirement Scheme in a phased manner during 1998-99 to 2001-2002. Infusion of fresh resources by the strategic partner is expected to result in sustained employment for the remaining work force.

Import of Coking Coal

1461. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country's dependency on import of coking coal is increasing;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken by Government towards achieving self sufficiency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) and (b) There is a gap between demand and production of coking and superior grade